(a) whether it is a fact that in April, 2001, Peoples for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has warned Indian officials that eventually the world market will boycott buying Indian leather goods; and

(b) if so, whether Government have made any alternative arrangements to sell Indian leather and leather goods?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has been running a campaign against the Indian leather on grounds of alleged cruelty to animals in transportation and in abattoirs and continues to exert pressure on overseas buyers to boycott import of Indian leather products.

(b) The Indian leather industry is a completely decontrolled and deregulated sector and the success of marketing of Indian leather products abroad depends on interplay of various market forces. However in order to address the issue of cruelty to animals, Government, on its part, is making a concerted and coordinated effort, with the involvement of State Governments, for ensuring strict compliance of the provisions under Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 and rules made thereunder.

Duty free import from Pakistan

2457. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are planning to permit duty free import of about 50 items from Pakistan;

(b) if so, what are the items; and

(c) the number of items which are permitted by Pakistan at present for import from India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) The matter of granting tariff concessions to Pakistan on 50 tariff lines is under consideration of the Government.

(c) At present, Pakistan allows free imports of 601 items from India.